THEOSOPHY

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More than one great scholar has stated that there never was a religious founder, whether Aryan, Semitic or Turanian, who had invented *a new religion, or revealed a new truth. These founders were all* transmitters, *not original teachers. They were the authors of new forms and interpretations, while the truths upon which the latter were based were as old as mankind. Selecting one or more of those grand verities—actualities visible only to the real Sage and Seer—out of the many orally revealed to man in the beginning, preserved and perpetuated in the* adyta *of the temples through initiation, during the Mysteries and by personal transmission—they revealed these truths to the masses.*

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

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THE THEOSOPHY COMPANY

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II *The study of ancient and modern religions, philosophies and sciences, and the demonstration of the importance of such study; and*

III *The investigation of the unexplained laws of Nature and the psychical powers latent in man.*

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Without insight there is no meditation and also without meditation there is no insight. With both insight and meditation one approaches Nirvana.

The Dhammapada

THEOSOPHY

VOLUME 66 MARCH, 1978 NUMBER 5

THE UNFOLDING CYCLE

H P. BLAVATSKY refers in various places to the change which had come over the age in her time—the last quarter of the nineteenth century—but speaks of it in particular in two of her *Lucifer* articles, "The Tidal Wave" (November, 1889) and "The Cycle Moveth" (March, 1890). In the first of these she seems mainly concerned with the broad aspect of Theosophic influence, stressing the far-reaching effect of literature, repeating Milton's high estimate of the importance of good books. She names Dostoevsky as one who, through his novels, awakened greater moral awareness in many of the readers of his time, saying that "most of the administrative reforms during the last twenty years are due to the silent and *unwelcome* influence of his pen." There were others, also, who wrote with good effect, taking part in what she termed a "death struggle between Mysticism and Materialism." The journals of the day, she suggested, were filled with "a clash of public opinion."

What was the outcome of that struggle? Although the tone of "The Tidal Wave" seems optimistic, heralding "a new race of authors" who were breaking with the tradition-bound past, fighting bravely for "human rights and *man's divine nature,*" H.P.B. was also impelled to warn: "But woe to the XXth century if the now reigning school of thought prevails, for Spirit would once more be made captive and silenced till the end of the now coming age." Her meaning is clear. The conflict is episodic. We, now, at

the outset of a succeeding period, are witnessing the resumption of the struggle. During the cycle of H.P.B.'s work there was by no means the great victory she sought and hoped for, yet neither was there complete defeat. We may recognize in the course of events and thought which followed an evident confirmation of the cyclic mode of human development, as described in *Isis Unveiled* (I, 34):

> Thus we see in history a regular alternation of ebb and flow in the tide of human progress. . . . We see the same thing in the literature of peoples. An age of great inspiration and unconscious productiveness is invariably followed by an age of criticism and consciousness. The one affords material for the analyzing and critical intellect of the other.

The nineteenth century was indeed a time of intellectual release. Many minds gained freedom from the bondage of theology, the scientific movement playing a large part in this. Even though materialist in implication, science at least contributed greatly to self-reliance in thought. "It is due to Science," exclaimed an American Unitarian H.P.B. quoted approvingly elsewhere, "that we have any conception at all of a *living* God." The idea of evolution, although weighted down by Darwinism, was plainly weakening to the personal-god idea. Meanwhile, we are today in a position to appreciate the extraordinary effect on modern thought of the discovery of radioactivity, to which H.P.B. referred in *The Secret Doctrine,* nearly a decade before it occurred, saying: "We are at the very close of the cycle of 5,000 years of the present Aryan Kaliyuga; and between this time and 1897 there will be a large rent made in the Veil of Nature, and materialistic science will receive a death-blow." (I, 612.) While H.P.B. here refers to what might be called philosophic or speculative materialism, as distinguished from moral materialism and hedonistic doctrines of self-indulgence, a relation exists between the two. Once the claim that "matter" is all is shaken, other assumptions must be adopted and today, three quarters of a century after the "death-blow" to materialism, this is at last happening in scientific thought. It is time, Werner Heisenberg said shortly before he died, for physicists to abandon the search for the elementary particle, the "building block" of the universe, and "accept instead the concept of fundamental symmetries, which is a concept out of Plato." (*The Nature of Scientific Discovery,* Smithsonian Institution Press, 1975.)

There is similar evidence that the grip of Darwinism is slowly loosening. Thoughtful anthropologists have pointed out the insecure if not fictitious basis of beast-like sculptures representing "primitive man," reconstructed from a few old bones; anatomists have questioned the possibility that man could be descended from an anthropoid or related ape; Natural Selection is increasingly recognized as inadequate to account for the differentiation of species; and, finally, essayists are pointing out that there is no sound reason for assuming that only "physical" development deserves attention. One writer has recently noted that H. P. Blavatsky was the first in Western thought to declare a non-physical doctrine of Evolution. In short, since the beginning of this century, the analyzing and critical intellect has been assiduously at work, cataloguing the flaws in nineteenth-century materialism and opening the way to more philosophic views of both man and nature.

It is natural, then, that in the present there is once more the din of controversy over new alignments of opinion. Once again are heard the strengthening voices of champions of the spirit of man, calling the anxious if still somewhat prosperous people of the West to account. The impetus behind this awakening is quite evidently twofold. Added to the inner but potent inspiration of the cycle is the growing realization that an exploitive, acquisitive attitude toward nature is the highroad to imminent disaster. The new science of ecology has become one of the most influential forces of modern thought. Its spokesmen spell out doctrines of responsibility—popularizing the idea of Reverence for Life—and giving concrete evidence that the planet itself may soon refuse to support habits shaped by nothing better than getting and spending. There are undercurrents of spiritual ideas in the declarations of some of these articulate reformers, and such themes are in natural harmony with other lines of thinking—in psychology, sociology, and cultural anthropology. In one way or another these new tendencies reject the materialistic assumptions that were so strong during the first half of the twentieth century.

Little need be said about the psychic side of the present cycle, since its extravagances, having become glamorously popular, are everywhere advertised and described. But this development, like the cycle of Spiritualism in the nineteenth century, has also its mind-freeing aspect. Its two-fold influence has due attention in H.P.B.'s Messages to the American Theosophists and can be under-

stood as inevitably a part of a further incarnation of Manas which takes place in the midst of Kali Yuga. By such means, it seems clear, the stage is being set for another cycle "of great inspiration and unconscious productiveness," the positive effect of which may be more in evidence after the froth that blurs and misleads human longing has settled and been brushed aside.

The impact of ecological discovery and energy shortages, together with the warnings attendant on both, has at least one quality in common with the onset of Spiritualism in the nineteenth century —it came from a wholly unexpected quarter. We know that in a few brief years of our own time the formations of controversial opinion have radically changed in character, with issues that were virtually unknown twenty years ago now occupying the foreground of debate. Such sudden transformations, so potent in reorienting lines of thought, are ample evidence of the unreliability of conventional predictions concerning the future. Unknown cycles of various sorts affect the course of human decision, working changes which can hardly be anticipated.

Speaking of the stir caused by Spiritualistic phenomena a century ago, H.P.B. wrote in "The Cycle Moveth":

> It was the inner voice of the masses, their spiritual intuition —that traditional enemy of cold intellectual reasoning, the legitimate progenitor of Materialism—that had awakened from its long cataleptic sleep. . . . However unsatisfactory their philosophical interpretation, these phenomena being genuine and true as truth itself in their being and their reality, they were undeniable; and being in their very nature beyond denial, they came to be regarded as evident proofs of a life beyond—opening, moreover, a wide range for the admission of every metaphysical possibility . . . whether these phenomena contain *per se* or not the *proof of immortality*, demonstrating as they do the existence of invisible and spiritual regions where other forces than those known to exact science are at work—they are shown to lie beyond the realm of materialism.

By reason of this effect on the mind of the times, H.P.B. called Spiritualism "an earlier revival of crude Theosophy," despite the fact that, as she said, "the waters of the great 'Spiritual' flood were neither primordial nor pure."

While these phenomena could not reverse the thinking of the hard-core materialists, a persisting ferment was set going in the minds of all those open to alternative conceptions. "Many were

those," H.P.B. said, "on whom the spiritual and psychic evolution of the cycle wrought an indelible impression; and such ex-materialists could never return again to their iconoclastic ideas." She is speaking here of an underlying mood, having the potentiality of a great change in attitude and assumption. We have only to consider the temper of present-day belief to recognize the fruition of this change, now pressed to the surface as a result of anxiety, social unrest, and psychological frustration. There was a similar flowering of the work of Mesmer, some hundred years after he had been "officially" discredited by the French Academy. Mesmer's ideas, while driven underground, eventually surfaced in a variety of new philosophies and sects, among them New Thought, Christian Science, and other cults, and Mesmer's basic teachings served, in turn, as material for H.P.B.'s purposes in giving an account of the psychic principles of man.

In "The Cycle Moveth," however, H.P.B. spoke more directly of the occult influence that was exerted during her time, saying;

> The enormous and ever-growing numbers of mystics at the present time show better than anything else the undeniably occult working of the cycle. Thousands of men and women who belong to no church, sect or society, who are neither Theosophists nor Spiritualists, are yet virtually members of that Silent Brotherhood the units of which often do not know each other, belonging as they do to nations far and wide apart, yet each of whom carries on his brow the mark of the mysterious Karmic seal—the seal that makes of him or her a member of the Brothhood of the Elect of Thought.

To illustrate her meaning she speaks of the great change which came over Tolstoi's life during the late 1870s and early '80s, turning him into "a full-fledged mystic." "What," she asks, "is the mysterious influence which has suddenly forced him into that weird current without almost any transition period?" She adds:

> And yet Count Tolstoi is by no means a solitary example of the work of that mysterious cycle of psychic and spiritual evolution now in its full activity—a work which, silently and unperceived, will grind to dust the most grand and magnificent structures of materialistic speculations, and reduce to nought in a few days the intellectual work of years. What is that moral and invisible Force? Eastern philosophy alone can explain.

Such, then, in retrospect, was the composition of forces which went into the Theosophical hundred-year cycle of the nineteenth century, part of the background for the open establishment, in

1975, of the Theosophical Society in New York. It was a time of sudden advance in intellectual discovery, focusing high human aspiration, but also a period, as H.P.B. pointed out, which had to come to an end. There were also limits to the possible achievement of that time. As she explained in *The Secret Doctrine* (I, 326):

> So true it is that the noblest ideal to which the religious Spirit of one age can soar, will appear but a gross caricature to the philosophic mind in a succeeding epoch! The philosophers themselves had to be *initiated into perceptive mysteries,* before they could grasp the correct idea of the ancients in relation to this most metaphysical subject [the GOD-IDEA]. Otherwise—outside such initiation—for every thinker there will be a "Thus far shalt thou go and no farther," mapped out by his intellectual capacity, as clearly and as unmistakeably as there is for the progress of any nation or race in its cycle by the law of Karma. Outside of initiation, the ideals of contemporary religious thought must always have their wings clipped and remain unable to soar higher; for idealistic as well as realistic thinkers, and even free-thinkers, are but the outcome and the natural product of their respective environments and periods. The ideals of both are only the necessary results of their temperaments, and the outcome of that phase of intellectual progress to which a nation, in its collectivity, has attained.

H.P.B. did all she could to make the nineteenth-century cycle as beneficial as possible. She did this not only through public influence on the mind of the times, but also by establishing in the world an avenue of approach to Initiation, as becomes plain from her writings about the path of discipleship and about possible relations with the Teachers from whom she had learned. In addition to the broad effect of her work, we may think that the thought and strivings of Theosophic students and disciples contributes to the leavening of the mind of the times, since those who pursue direct study and promulgation of the teachings of the Wisdom Religion —the "Companions" spoken of by Mr. Judge—must also have their effect.

So, in the present, the struggle described so dramatically by H.P.B. in the "Tidal Wave" has been renewed. The provocations and stimuli are obviously altered, some having a maturer form as the result of a century of assimilation, while others are new and, it may be, more compelling in that the future well-being, if not the survival, of the human race is so plainly involved. Also to be con-

sidered is the effect of cycles within cycles, bringing intensifications first of one aspect of the movement, then of another. H.P.B. wrote in "The Cycle Moveth" published in 1890, a year before her death:

> But, during the last three years all this has rapidly changed and the demand for mystic information became so great, that the Theosophical Publishing Society could not find workers enough to supply the demand. Even the "Secret Doctrine," the most abstruse of our publications—notwithstanding its forbidding price, the conspiracy of silence, and the nasty contemptuous flings at it by some daily papers—has proved financially a success. That which Theosophists hardly dared to speak about with bated breath for fear of being called lunatics but a few years ago, is now being given out by lecturers, publicly advocated by mystical clergymen.

Such goings-on have now a familiar ring. Theosophy—or rather various dilutions of Theosophy under that or some other name—seems likely to become almost "popular," and while there is always danger in glamorous ideas divorced from philosophy, the psychic and even intellectual susceptibilities of the race are now opening to the point where conceptions of occult reality may at least be entertained, and understood by some. But these developments hardly need much attention, save for notice, from serious Theosophical students. Their task is not to arrange or attempt what seem suitable compromises in behalf of a wider popularization of weakened Theosophical ideas, but rather to maintain, throughout the world, open sources of the undiluted teaching, exactly as it was given out by the nineteenth-century Teachers. Without purity at the source, the dilutions can hardly be of benefit; and the spread by dilution, after all, is an activity that can be left to Karma—to those, that is, unable to accept the Theosophical Teachings in their original strength and moral vigor.

Meanwhile, the cycle in this century is still quite young—barely begun, in fact. Surely there are other impacts in store, to bring corresponding changes of rhythm, and powerful accelerations yet to be felt. If, as H.P.B. remarks in "The Esoteric Character of the Gospels," "The twentieth century has strange developments in store for humanity, and may even be the last of its name," we have full reason to think that the potentialities of our cycle remain largely undisclosed.

WESTERN OCCULTISM

DO not be discouraged; there is no cause; nothing that is done with ease is really very good or lasting; there must be annoyances and strains here and there.

We are not always to be reforming others, while at the same time we can refuse to let the others damage the work.

If you had lecture after lecture, and merely new members and no building up of the old members, your branch would die the moment the supply of lecturing was cut off. Try and impress this on whatever of the members are willing to listen.

The accounts of other incarnations are not useful nor reliable; they will do no good in the end, but may lead to vanity and gloom; therefore, they are to be avoided. I never knew a case yet where such were followed or relied on that had not bad consequences. And the only Adepts I ever knew refuse to tell of one's past life: it is a rule of occultism that relations of past lives shall not be indulged in—similar to the rule against relating your progress in the higher life *in this life*. A study of spiritual philosophy as found in the *Bhagavad-Gita* will shed light on all possible events, which are mere motions and unreal apparitions, hiding the truth from our perception.

Difficulties and friction are the accompaniments of existence, and if everything was smooth and all right all the time we would have nothing to do. Our movement is a reform one, dealing with the very character of the race, and therefore neither we nor the other members of the race are perfect. Did you ever reflect on the question: "What would you do if all our ideals for man were accomplished, if altruism were universal?" We would have to emigrate to some worse planet to have scope for our feelings. Hence we should accept all the difficulties as part of the day's work, and try to get as many people, including ourselves, arranged for help as we can.

In regard to the movement, you may be sure that it will be taken care of, if the members do their part. H.P.B. laid down the lines of work, and if we follow these, we may safely leave the

results in the hands of the Master and the Law of Karma.

Try to progress in harmony; the other kind of progress will then follow in due course. Be a centre of harmony yourself and others will help you in spreading that feeling throughout.

Let us all draw closer together in mind and heart, soul and act, and try thus to make that true brotherhood through which alone our universal and particular progress can come.

—WILLIAM Q. JUDGE

It is safe to say that if a man is satisfied with what he is getting out of life, and if there is nothing that he wants,—then there is nothing else desirable. To him anything outside of that which gratifies is adscititious, not worthy of consideration. In such case there is nothing that can be done. Having dropped some seed, the character of the soil may be determined. The duty of the sower is to sow; the seed will test the soil.

To talk Theosophy in the spirit of Theosophy cannot be wrong; so what we have to learn is to guard and "use with care those living messengers called words."

Do not try to explain everything so fully as to leave no room for germinative thought on the part of enquirers.

I do not think it wise to press any one or try to convince. Make bold statements, if desired, to provoke question and stimulate enquiry, but let it go at that.

The argumentative attitude is of little value in Theosophy. *It amounts to each endeavoring to uphold his own position.* With this attitude, any kind of a statement calculated to undermine the opponent's position is generally considered proper, and is used regardless of the truth involved. Rely on the power of truth perceived; if this is done there is not much left for any other assumption of power. So with speaking: it is an acquisition, a talent, gained by *yourself,* and *for use*—not of the transient physical man—but of the Divine Man.

Some hear and pass on; some remain. There is always freedom of choice, the choice being not one merely of determination, but made up of many moments of choice in past lives.

An iconoclast of any well-recognized system can obtain crowded houses; but a "builder" gets the few. A commentary on the

human mind as at present constituted: it brings "home" Mr. Judge's saying "Theosophy is for those who want it *and for none others.*" But it matters little if few come to the meetings; those few may be the means of bringing many. The effort and sacrifice are what bring *the ultimate result*. We are holding, waiting and working for those few earnest souls who will grasp the plan and further the work, "for the harvest is ready and the laborers are few." Those who are entitled to the first invitation to the feast have had it, and now with many of these—sad to say—their ears are so dulled and their attention so diverted that no number of repetitions will reach them.

Yet it must be held out *continually for all*. That is our work—our self-assumed work.

In our age it is well to consider what the Great Ones have done, and do. Age after age, year after year, They conserve the knowledge and *wait,* doing what They can, and how They can, in accordance with cyclic law. Knowing this, and doing thus, there can be no room in us for doubt or discouragement.

—ROBERT CROSBIE

THE REALITY OF MYSTICISM

Many whose temperaments are no more mystical than mine know moments when we draw courage and joy from experiences which lie outside the getting and spending of everyday life. The occasions of such experiences are many. The commonest and perhaps the least obviously related are these: reading a poem and contemplating a child—human or animal. But the experiences come to different men in many different ways. Some are most likely to be aware of them in solitude, others in crowds; some while looking at the stars, some while watching the waves roll in upon a beach. And whether you call the experience infrarational or super-rational, it involves the momentary acceptance of values not definable in terms of that common sense to which we ordinarily accord our first loyalty. And to all such experiences one thing is common. There is a sense of satisfaction which is not personal but impersonal. One no longer asks, "What's in it for me?" because one is no longer a separate selfish individual but part of the welfare and joy of the whole.

—JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

ON POWER

(From *The Irish Theosophist,* June 1896)

WHEN you laugh much it goes against your power. I have told you this before. This does not mean you are to be disagreeable or strained. Too much laughter is as bad as intense sorrow, jealousy or anger. When you are spoken to, smile if the occasion demands it, but try to curb laughter which tends to emotion only.

Never tell people what you intend to do, but do it. When you speak of your intentions the power to do it is decreased.

Never debase your idea of yourself to others; it is a form of vanity and lessens your power just that much, weakens your ability to help those you wish to help. Keep up to what people think of you or you'll drop flat. Never think, "I cannot do it." You can do it if you will; you can be what you desire to be. If you think you cannot learn to do any certain small or difficult thing you will never do it. This does not mean that it is necessary to get "big head"; that is an extreme which lessens your power. But stop regarding your personal self, neither debase nor regard yourself in the matter at all, and do not go to extremes either way. A week of this plan if followed will show you the power gained by following what I say.

When you speak give things of value or people will say it is rubbish. When you get up to speak try to feel what is needed by those who hear you, of value to them in practice. When you have said the words cut yourself off from them. Your audience will thus get what is needed, and forgetting you will carry home the ideas. Your power will lie in this.

When you write don't state things you can't explain, but tell what you see and feel as though directly to the person who wishes to know. This will give you power of expression in writing. I have told you as to speaking. These are a few ideas as to power you can gain, on which you had better practice and get a grip of them. They seem trivial and of little importance, but if you are to learn you can begin in no other way and I have not time for talk. Act on it or I'll stop. Therefore get hold of yourself, get wisdom, for this is power.

NOTE.—Reprinted from THEOSOPHY 25:177.

THE WISDOM RELIGION

IV: OCCULT AND MODERN SCIENCE

THE relationship of modern science to ancient occult science is variously given by H. P. B. in her books and articles. A few quotations will suffice. Thus, in *The Secret Doctrine* she says:

> There can be no possible conflict between the teachings of occult and so-called exact Science, where the conclusions of the latter are grounded on a substratum of unassailable fact. It is only when its more ardent exponents, over-stepping the limits of observed phenomena in order to penetrate into the arcana of Being, attempt to wrench the formation of Kosmos and its *living* Forces from Spirit, and attribute all to blind matter, that the Occultists claim the right to dispute and call in question their theories. Science cannot, owing to the very nature of things, unveil the mystery of the universe around us. Science can, it is true, collect, classify, and generalize upon phenomena; but the occultist, arguing from admitted metaphysical data, declares that the daring explorer, who would probe the inmost secrets of Nature, must transcend the narrow limitations of sense, and transfer his consciousness into the region of noumena and the sphere of primal causes. To effect this, he must develop faculties which are absolutely dormant—save in a few rare and exceptional cases—in the constitution of the off-shoots of our present Fifth Root-race in Europe and America. (I, 477-78.)
>
> Science is ever *becoming*, and can never say, "I am that I am." On the other hand, Occult Science has its *changeless* traditions from prehistoric times. It may err in particulars; it can never become guilty of a mistake in questions of Universal laws, simply because that Science, justly referred to by philosophy as the "divine," was born on higher planes, and was brought on Earth by beings who were wiser than man will be, even in the seventh Race of his Seventh Round. (I, 516.)

The following is from *Isis Unveiled:*

> The methods of modern science, however exact, must end in nullity. In no one branch can it demonstrate the origin and ultimate of things. Instead of tracing the effect from its primal source, its progress is the reverse. Its higher types, as it teaches, are all evolved from antecedent lower ones. It starts from the

> bottom of the cycle, led on step by step in the great labyrinth of nature by a thread of matter. As soon as this breaks and the clue is lost, it recoils in affright from the Incomprehensible, and confesses itself *powerless*. (I,13-14.)

In *The Key to Theosophy* H. P. B. remarks the foolishness of scientists who judge of the nature of other worlds and their inhabitants by our own. As she says, "alter the conditions cosmic and planetary, and there must be as a result quite a different flora, fauna and mankind," even on this little earth. She offers this comment:

> What science in general will never accept as proof—the cumulative testimony of an endless series of Seers who have testified to this fact. Their spiritual visions, real explorations by, and through, physical and spiritual senses untrammelled by blind flesh, were systematically checked and compared one with the other, and their nature sifted. All that was not corroborated by unanimous and collective experience was rejected, while that only was recorded as established truth which, in various ages, under different climes, and throughout an untold series of incessant observations, was found to agree and receive constantly further corroboration. The methods used by our scholars and students of the psycho-spiritual sciences do not differ from those of students of the natural and physical sciences, as you may see. Only our fields of research are on two different planes, and our instruments are made by no human hands, for which reason perchance they are only the more reliable. The retorts, accumulators, and microscopes of the chemist and naturalist may get out of order; the telescope and the astronomer's horological instruments may get spoiled; our recording instruments are beyond the influence of weather or the elements. (Pp. 86-87.)

The questioner asks about the "faith" in these teachings, and H. P. B. replies:

> Faith is a word not to be found in theosophical dictionaries: we say *knowledge, based on observation and experience*. There is this difference, however, that while the observation and experience of physical science lead the Scientists to about as many "working" hypotheses as there are minds to evolve them, our *knowledge* consents to add to its lore only those facts which have become undeniable, and which are fully and absolutely demonstrated. We have no two beliefs or hypotheses on the same subject. (P. 87.)

There is this further passage in the *Secret Doctrine:*

> The ancient adepts have solved the great problems of science,

> however unwilling modern materialism may be to admit the fact. The mysteries of Life and Death *were* fathomed by the great master-minds of antiquity; and if they have preserved them in secrecy and silence, it is because these problems formed part of the sacred mysteries; and, secondly, because they must have remained incomprehensible to the vast majority of men then, as they do now. . . . Let us bide our time. Meanwhile, it is not in the human constitution to witness in silence the destruction of one's gods, whether they be true or false. And as theology and materialism have combined together to destroy the old gods of antiquity and seek to disfigure every old philosophical conception, it is but just that the lovers of old wisdom should defend their position, by proving that the whole arsenal of the two is, at best, formed of new weapons made out of very old material. (II, 451.)

We are given a vivid picture of these "ancient adepts":

> In the first or earlier portion of the existence of this third race, while it was yet in its state of purity, the "Sons of Wisdom," who, . . . incarnated in this Third Race, produced by *Kriyasakti* a progeny called the "Sons of Ad" or "of the Fire-Mist," the "Sons of Will and Yoga," etc. They were a conscious production. . . . It was at first a wondrous Being, called the "Initiator," and after him a group of semi-divine and semi-human beings. *"Set apart"* in Archaic *genesis* for certain purposes, they are those in whom are said to have incarnated the highest Dhyanis, "Munis and Rishis from previous manvantaras"—*to form the nursery for future human adepts,* on this earth and during the present cycle. (S.D.I., 207.)

This "Wondrous Being," the Root-Race of the Adept Hierarchy, has a name which can only be translated by several compound words into English—"the ever-living-human-Banyan." He is

> the *Tree* from which, in subsequent ages, all the great *historically* known Sages and Hierophants, such as the Rishi Kapila, Hermes, Enoch, Orpheus, etc., etc., have branched off . . . it is he again Who holds spiritual sway over the *initiated* Adepts throughout the whole world. . . .
>
> It is under the direct, silent guidance of this MAHA—(great)—GURU that all the other less divine Teachers and instructors of mankind became, from the first awakening of human consciousness, the guides of early Humanity. . . .
>
> It is the pupils of those incarnated Rishis and Devas of the third Root Race, who handed their knowledge from one generation to another. (I, 207-08.)

The mysteries of Heaven and Earth, revealed to the Third

> Race by their celestial teachers in the days of their purity, became a great focus of light, the rays from which became necessarily weakened as they were diffused and shed upon an uncongenial, because too material soil. . . . Alone a handful of primitive men—in whom the spark of divine Wisdom burnt bright, and only strengthened in its intensity as it got dimmer and dimmer with every age in those who turned it to bad purposes—remained the elect custodians of the Mysteries revealed to mankind by the divine Teachers. (II, 281.)

(*To be concluded*)

PROVERBS FROM LUCIFER

It is requisite to defend those who are unjustly accused of having acted injuriously, but to praise those who excel in a certain good.

Neither will the horse be judged to be generous that is sumptuously adorned, but the horse whose nature is illustrious: nor is the man worthy who possesses great wealth, but he whose soul is generous.

When the wise man opens his mouth the beauties of his soul present themselves to the view, like the statues in a temple.

Remind yourself that all men assert that wisdom is the greatest good, but that there are few who strenuously endeavour to obtain this greatest good.

Be sober, and remember to be disposed to believe, for these are the nerves of Wisdom.

It is better to live lying on the grass, confiding in divinity and yourself, than to lie on a golden bed with perturbation.

You will not be in want of anything which it is in the power of Fortune to give and take away.

—STOBAEUS

REINCARNATION

(From a private letter to WILLIAM Q. JUDGE, *F. T. S., published in the "Platonist")*

YOU ask me what is my belief about "reincarnation?" Well, as it is a complicated question, I must give you a plain statement of my full belief. To begin with, I am a Pantheist. I believe that *the whole universe is God.* You must, however, well understand that the word "God" does not convey to me any meaning attached to that word by the Westerns. When I say "God," I understand it to be nature or universe, and no more. Therefore I might more appropriately be called a "naturalist." To my mind there is no possibility of the existence of an extra-cosmical Deity. For if there were, the harmony or equilibrium of nature could not be preserved, and the whole universe, instead of being one harmonious whole, would be a Tower of Babel. This harmony can be kept only by the working of the Immutable Laws of Nature. And if the laws of nature be immutable, they must be blind, and require no guiding hand.[1] Hence the existence of an extra-cosmical Deity is impossible. This is, as far as I can understand, the chief teaching and principle of Aryan philosophy. As the position is logical, I must accept it in preference to the Semitic theory, which rests on blind faith alone.

Some of the Pantheists recognize the existence of two distinct entities, viz., Matter and Spirit. But thinking deeply over the subject, has led me to the conclusion that their position is not quite logical; for, as far as I can understand, there can be but one Infinite entity and not two. Call it either matter or spirit, but it is one and the same. Who can say that this is spirit and that matter? Take an instance: Ice is a gross form of matter. If a little rarefied it will be water, which is still matter. Higher still, it is vapor; still matter. Higher, gas; it is still matter. Further, it becomes ether, but it is still matter; and then you may go on *ad infinitum.* Thus be-

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[1] As this sentence is likely to be misunderstood, the attention of the reader may be drawn to the article on "The Metaphysical Basis of *Esoteric Buddhism*" published in last month's *Theosophist.* What is meant is that the *inherent* impulse acts blindly, *i.e.*, without any *extraneous* or *extra-natural* power meddling with it as a "guide" or in any other way.

NOTE.—This article first appeared in the *Theosophist* for June, 1884 (V, 209).

coming more and more sublimated, it will reach its climax by the way of spiritualisation. But still it does not become nothing. For if it does, there must come a time, when the whole universe will be nothing. If it is so, it is not infinite, as it has an end. If it has an end, it must have had a beginning; if it had a beginning, it must have been created; and thus we must assume the existence of an extra cosmical Deity, which, as said above, is not logical. Then we thus logically find that this highest sublimated form of matter cannot be nothing. In this case matter has reached that climax of sublimation or spiritualisation when any further action would make it grosser, not finer. What is commonly understood by the word *spirit* then, is nothing but that highly etherealised form of matter, which we, with our finite senses, cannot comprehend. But it is still matter, inasmuch as it is still something and liable to be grosser.

There is then *only one* eternal infinite existence, call it either spirit or matter. I will, however, call it by the latter name, as that is most suited in its common understanding for what I am to state. Matter, as you know, we call *Maya*. Some say that this thing does not really exist; but I do not agree to that. In my opinion, it is called *Maya simply on account of these transformations*. It is never steady. The process is ever working. The one infinite agglomeration of matter is in some of its modes becoming grosser, while in others becoming more sublimated. The circle is ever turning its round. Nothing goes out of that circle. Everything is kept within its bounds by the action of the centripetal and centrifugal forces. The *forms* are changing, but the *inner substance* remains the same.

You will ask: "What is the use of being good or bad, our souls in proper time will be etheralised?" But what is a soul?" Is it material or immaterial? Well, it is material for me, and there is nothing immaterial, as said above. As far as I can think, it is an agglomeration of all the attributes together with that something, which gives us the consciousness that we *are*. But in the case of the ice, it was not sublimated until touched by heat. The centripetal force was strong in its action, and it required the centrifugal force to refine the ice. Just so with man. The action of the centripetal force keeps us to our gross forms, and if we have to etheralise ourselves, we must supply the centrifugal force, which is our *Will*. And this is the first principle of Occultism. We must study and know the

forces of nature. Every result must be in proportion to the cause producing it. We are every instant emitting and attracting atoms of matter. Now a person, who is not an occultist, will have various desires, and unconsciously to himself he will produce a cause which will attract to him such atoms of matter as are not suited for his higher progress. The same way, when he is emitting others, he may give them such a tendency that they will mix with others evilly inclined; and thus other individualities, which are thus formed, will have to suffer for no fault of theirs. But an occultist directs both. He is the master of the situation. He guides them, and by knowing their action he produces such conditions as are favorable to his obtaining of "Nirvana."

But what is *Nirvana?* By Nirvana I mean a *state,* and not a locality. It is that condition, in which we are so etherealised, that instead of being merely a mode of the Infinite Existence as as present, we are merged in totality, or we become the *whole*. Another thing about the advanced occultist is that he is in a better position to benefit humanity.

The particles of which I am formed, have always existed; yet I do not know in what form they existed before. Probably they have passed through billions of transformations. Why do I not know these? Because I did not supply the force, that would have prevented the distintegration of my individuality. I will, if I attain Nirvana, remain there, till the action of the force that put me there ceases; the effect being always in proportion to the cause. The law of Exhaustion must assert itself.

In passing through this process of etherealisation, you all along give a certain tendency to the particles of which you are composed. This tendency will always assert itself; and thus in every cycle, or reincarnation, you will have the same advantages which you can always utilise to soon be free, and by remaining longer in the Nirvana state than the generality of humanity, you are comparatively free. So every consciousness, which has been once fully developed, must disintegrate, if not preserved by the purity of its successive Egos till the Nirvana state is attained. Now I believe that the full development of my consciousness as Krishna, is possible only on this earth, and therefore if I die before that is done, I must be reborn here. If I reach the Nirvana state, even though I

am in another body, I shall know myself as Krishna.

Now I suppose this is sufficient for you. It is difficult to put such ideas on paper. Such things are to be understood intuitionally.

* * *

The Bhagavad-Gita

The theory of Anquetil du Perron that the *Bhagavad-Gita* is an independent work, as it is absent from several manuscripts of the *Mahâ-Bhârata,* may be as much a plea for a still greater antiquity as the reverse. The work is purely metaphysical and ethical, and in a certain sense it is *anti-Vedic*; so far, at least, that it is in opposition with many of the later Brahmanical interpretations of the *Vedas*. How comes it, then, that instead of destroying the work, or, at least, of sentencing it as uncannonical—an expedient to which the Christian Church would never have failed to resort—the Brahmans show it the greatest reverence? Perfectly *unitarian* in its aim, it clashes with the popular idol-worship. Still, the only precaution taken by the Brahmans to keep its tenets from becoming too well known, is to preserve it more secretly than any other religious book from every caste except the sacerdotal; and, to impose upon that even, in many cases, certain restrictions. The grandest mysteries of the Brahmanical religion are embraced within this magnificent poem; and even the Buddhists recognize it, explaining certain dogmatic difficulties in their own way. "Be unselfish, subdue your senses and passions, which obscure reason and lead to deceit," says Christna to his disciple Arjuna, thus enunciating a purely Buddhistic principle.

—H. P. Blavatsky

letters • questions • comment

What is the obligation of Theosophists in relation to the world's present ailments? Disseminating ideas doesn't seem to be enough in a world that demands changes of a sweeping character, if it is to survive and not be set far back in its evolutionary progress. We so often rely on the idea that Karma must and will take its course, forgetting that we are its creators and directors.

The question seems to imply that Theosophists know what ought to be done in order to produce "changes of a sweeping character." If it be admitted that "good intentions" are not enough, and that the miscalculations and mistakes of revolutionists and reformers have imposed great evils and much suffering on mankind, the question then becomes: Do Theosophists know better what to do? If so, why don't they do it?

Two issues need to be addressed. First, what and how much could the wisest teachers or "saviors" do for the human race in its present condition? Second, if Theosophists are disciples or followers of the wisest among men, what should they do with what they are learning, or have learned?

It happens that Madame Blavatsky replied directly to questions of this sort in her *Lucifer* article, "Let Every Man Prove his own Work" (reprinted in the H. P. B. pamphlet, *Basic Questions*). At the conclusion of this extended discussion, she wrote:

> As soon as he begins to understand what a friend and teacher pain can be, the Theosophist stands appalled before the mysterious problem of human life, and though he may long to do good works, equally dreads to do them wrongly until he has himself acquired greater power and knowledge. The ignorant doing of good works may be vitally injurious, as all but those who are blind in their love of benevolence are compelled to acknowledge. In this sense the answer made as to the lack of Christ-like lives among Theosophists, that there are probably none strong enough to live such, is perfectly correct and covers the whole question. . . . Therefore it is that Theosophists cannot pose as a body of philanthropists, though secretly they may adventure on the path of good works. They profess to be

> a body of learners merely, pledged to help each other and all the rest of humanity, so far as in them lies, to a better understanding of the mystery of life, and to a better knowledge of the peace which lies beyond it. . . .
>
> Their efforts may not come under the title of good works, and they may be condemned as a school of idle talkers, yet they are an outcome and fruition of this particular moment of time, when the ideas which they hold are greeted by the crowd with interest; and therefore their work is good, as the lotus-flower is good when it opens in the mid-day sun.
>
> None know more keenly and definitely than they that good works are necessary; only these cannot be rightly accomplished without knowledge. Schemes for Universal Brotherhood, and the redemption of mankind, might be given out plentifully by the great adepts of life, and would be mere dead-letter utterances while individuals remain ignorant, and unable to grasp the great meaning of their teachers. To Theosophists we say, let us carry out the rules given us for our Society before we ask for any further schemes or laws. To the public and our critics we say, try to understand the value of good works before you demand them of others, or enter upon them rashly yourselves. Yet it is an absolute fact that without good works the spirit of brotherhood would die in the world; and this can never be. Therefore is the double activity of learning and doing most necessary; we have to do good, and we have to do it *rightly*, with knowledge.

In the *Key* (pp. 233-37), replying to a similar question, H. P. B. offers guidance in the choice of "good works," providing canons of decision. In her article, "Our Cycle and the Next" (pamphlet, *Cycles and Human Destiny*), she describes a form of society that is less prone to the periodic disasters which overtake modern nation-states, while the *Path* article, "Living the Higher Life," has deep implications in relation to such problems. Crucial, of course, to the "knowledge" H. P. B. says is required for right action in the world is a grasp of Karma and the law of cycles. She speaks of the potent influence of swift-acting forces such as "wars, speculations, epidemics, the devastation of famines or of religious fanaticism" in "The Fall of Ideals," and at the conclusion of this article suggests that waves of violent protest and even terrorism will not cease until greed, bias, and prejudice are eliminated from earth, and rich and poor join in the common service of a true freedom. (See the pamphlet, *Moral and Social Issues.*) A further light is given by Mr. Judge in *Echoes from the Orient* where, in chapter

VIII, he speaks of our present as "a preparatory cycle with much of necessary destruction in it," since "before construction, we must have some disintegration." Elsewhere it is said that patriots will break their hearts in vain when they struggle against the inexorable sway of Karmic law, not being able to see its necessity or even hidden beneficence; and in the pamphlet of his articles titled *Cycles* (No. 7) he makes the following statements:

> *Unrest is the word for this cycle. The people will rise.* For what, who can tell? The statesman who can see for what the uprising will be might take measures to counteract. But all your measures cannot turn back from the iron wheel of fate. . . . Let those whose ears can hear the whispers and the noise of the gathering clouds of the future, take notice; let them read, if they know how, the physiognomy of the United States whereon the mighty hand of nature has traced the furrows to indicate the character of the moral storms that will pursue their course no matter what the legislation may be. . . .
>
> The cycle is closing, and everywhere unrest will prevail. As lands will disappear or be changed, so in like manner ideas will alter among men. And, as our civilization is based on force and devoid of a true philosophical basis, the newest race—in America—will more quickly than any other show the effect of false teachings and corrupted religion.
>
> But out of anger and disturbance will arise a new and better time; yet not without the pain which accompanies every new birth.

"Kill in thyself all memory of past experiences," the Voice *enjoins. "One single thought about the past that thou hast left behind will drag thee down and thou wilt have to start the climb anew." The sense of this is evident, but isn't there need for attention to the past, lest without thinking we repeat it? Knowledge of the past helps one to make wise choices. In other words, what is right use of the past?*

The Bhagavad-Gita says:

> "When he hath abandoned every desire that ariseth from the imagination and subdued with the mind the senses and organs which impel to action in every direction, being possessed of patience, he by degrees finds rest; and, having fixed his mind at rest in the true Self, he should think of nothing else."

In the light of this passage, the "memory" referred to in the

Voice is memory of desire which "ariseth from the imagination." The stress is on personally attractive replays of past accomplishments, disappointments, events and circumstances. To realize our full potential as mind-beings, we must filter out these distractions from present purpose.

Certainly, we cannot act rightly and intelligently if we do not think beforehand, learning the law from past experience, but the nature of our thought will tend toward the universal only if it is moved by unselfish and impersonal motive. We, as eternal beings, have living memories of past experiences in our vehicles for action, evolved out of that experience. Our present character is the result of lessons learned (or not learned) in the past, while the personality traits can be scattered like empty peanut shells to the winds after the "meat of the peanut" has been assimilated.

Dwelling on previous success or failure would be as detrimental to a Soul as a heart surgeon's preoccupation with a previous operation would be to the patient on whose organ he is now performing another. While he undoubtedly brings to today's operation the benefits of skill acquired in all past experience—better use of his instruments, a greater capacity for concentration, and more knowledge of the heart and its physiological environment—what would result if, during the operation, the surgeon were to become absorbed in the details of yesterday's surgery, from the moment of initial incision to the final suture? Our poor patient would probably perish under the knife!

"One single thought about the past" refers to that sort of attachment to the past, which means less of both freedom and wisdom in the present.

We Greeks are wrong in using the expressions "to come into being" and "to be destroyed," for no thing comes into being or is destroyed. Rather, a thing is mixed with or separated from already existing things. And so it would be more accurate to say, instead of origin, commingling; instead of destruction, dissolution.

—ANAXAGORAS

on the lookout

Two New Lodges

The good news of the establishment of a U.L.T. Lodge in Madras, India, was given in Lookout for last September (Vol. 65, p. 352). We are now able to report the addition of two more new Lodges, one a "reincarnation" of the Ottawa Lodge, the other in Turin, Italy. The Ottawa Lodge is located at 1001 Gregg Street, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. The meeting room has its own street entrance and is used only for Theosophical purposes. There is a regular evening study class on Wednesdays with a lecture once a month. The first meeting was on November 17, 1977.

The inaugural meeting of the Turin U.L.T. was held on November 19 in quarters at 5 Via Giusti, in a meeting room of adequate size, with adjoining space for a Theosophical library. The founding associates of the Turin Lodge—the first U.L.T. to be formed in Italy—have been together as a study group for seven years, identifying it as a Blavatsky Group early in 1975.

"Principles and Ideas"

In its general announcement to Italian students and inquirers, with invitation to attend meetings, the Turin Lodge said:

> A Lodge of U.L.T. is not a place or a group of people, though places and people constitute its natural vehicle, but "a name given to certain principles and ideas" whose nature and contents are to be found in the truths of Theosophy, in its grand ethical and reformatory Ideals and in its spiritual philosophy. The *impersonal* character of a Lodge is reflected directly in the objects aimed at realizing the Theosophic Cause, as well as in the methods of work carried on by its student-members.

The announcement speaks of support coming from U.L.T. students in various parts of Italy. The opening meeting was well attended, with members of a Rome study group as well as students and friends from other areas among those present.

Both the Ottawa and the Turin Lodges publish regularly a program giving the times of their meetings. The full address of the

Italian U.L.T. is Via Giusta, 5, 10121, Italy.

Study Group in France

Rather pleasant—indeed somewhat exciting—news comes from France in the form of a clipping from a Dijon newspaper (*Le Bien Public*, Oct. 10, 1977) reporting a meeting of the United Lodge of Theosophists study group in that city. The article, illustrated with the most familiar of the portraits of H.P.B., begins by reassuring its readers that Theosophical students are "normal" people who work without making a fuss. The reporter-visitor to a Dijon (pop. 112,000) study-class meeting said:

> Theosophists are not adepts of practices alarming to the uninitiated. They look like you and me, with the difference that they believe in Theosophy, a philosophy, science and religion. But, please note, theosophists practice tolerance, and are open-minded enough to admit amongst them unconscious theosophists, that is, all who are in search of truth.

Thoughtful Reporting

The report tells of the conduct of the class, giving basic ideas of the teaching, and pointing out that in Theosophical work "there is no hierarchy, no place of worship and no ritual." The group was recently formed in Dijon, but now has ten or so who attend the meetings. During the class discussion, the reporter relates, one is impressed by the open-mindedness of the students, and their amiability:

> You feel yourself to be a bit of a theosophist in your own heart. This, maybe, you are, too, for all roads lead to Theosophy if they proceed by searching for accurate thinking, right action and pure sensibility.
>
> It is a far cry from reading cards and table-turning. Theosophists do not need advertising.

The story concludes by giving the time of the weekly meetings and what is probably the title of a monthly lecture—"Reincarnation and the Destiny of Man." It is true that Theosophists do little advertising, but publicity of this sort is indeed welcome. "Theosophy pure and simple," as H.P.B. said long ago, "has still a severe battle to fight for recognition." It often happens that public references to Theosophy are more likely to confuse than to inform. The Dijon journalist, Marion Pannard, served her readers well.

Wonderings about Immortality

Meanwhile, in the United States, interest grows in books dealing with non-Christian religions and philosophies, according to *Publisher's Weekly* for Sept. 27 of last year. *The Secret Doctrine* is named as selling well, and now distributed by large retail chain bookstores. There is also increasing attention to the question of what happens after death, as a review in the *Hastings Center Report* for last October makes clear. Discussing five books on death, life-after-death, and immortality, Michael Marsh notes the absence in theological Christianity of helpful or philosophical teaching on this subject. He quotes a Protestant theologian who laments this weakness:

> "How many times have we been assaulted by our parishioners when we challenge the notion of the immortal soul. Death for the Christian is total, final; body and spirit. The soul does not float out to rejoin the great soul. We affirm the resurrection of the body."

"A Noble Vision"

"One wonders," the reviewer comments, "how many ordinary Christians are satisfied with this split view." Some of the books he considers, as for example Raymond Moody's *Life after Life,* are more explicit. (See Lookout for August, 1977.) The reviewer particularly recommends *Death and Eternal Life* by a British philosopher, John H. Hick, giving this account of its contents:

> Hick ends with a threefold analysis of man, described in the West as body-soul-spirit and in the East as body-mind-atman. . . . Building on this foundation, Hick explores the possibility of forms of reincarnation and a spreading out of personalities beyond the narrow ego, perhaps in other worlds than ours. In the end, he suggests, "the perfected individual will have become t personality without egoity, a living consciousness which is transparent to the other consciousness in relation to which it lives in a full community of love." This is a noble vision: but Hick's chief arguments are theological—that is, they assume a purposive meaningful universeJand hence may fail to persuade the skeptic.

To speak of the achievement of individual ego without personality would be more accurate, eliminating the habitual confusion of terms.

Concern with "Ultimate Fate"

Mr. Marsh makes this interesting comment on the changing

times:

> Our society is notable for its emphasis on two great themes: work and self-expression. During the 1960s the cutting edge for self-expression ran mostly to social activism, as evidenced by the civil rights, antiwar, community organization, and communal living movements. During the 1970s—based on earlier beginnings—the cutting edge for self-expression has shifted increasingly to personal exploration: the search for individual adventure, religious experience, heightened consciousness, freer and deeper loving, and openness toward death. The contrast between the 1960s and 1970s is by no means complete. But the dominant thrust for self-expression in America seems to have turned. The word "death" today evokes not mass death but individual deaths and even *my* death. This is one reason, I think, for a greater and more open concern about life after death. When the self-expression goal shifts to the personal, one's own ultimate fate becomes more momentous.

Whatever the reason—and we think that the causes behind this spreading interest in a life after death and in ideas about immortality run deeper than this writer suggests—the philosophic direction of this "personal" concern seems evident enough. One cannot wonder about what happens after death without reflecting on what life may be without a body, and for this thinking to become intelligible, metaphysics is required. The Darwinian and Spencerian idea of the struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest may suffice for those who consider life in only biological terms, but it has no meaning for the inquiring human spirit.

Instead of "a Monstrous World"

In 1974, in *A Pilgrim at Tinker Creek,* Annie Dillard, poet and essayist, declared her revolt, revealing the new spirit of exploration Mr. Marsh now finds so widely expressed. She wrote:

> Look: Cock Robin may die the most gruesome of slow deaths, and nature is no less pleased; the sun comes up, the creek rolls on, the survivors still sing. I cannot feel that way about your death, nor you about mine, nor either of us about the robin's—or even the barnacles'. We value the individual supremely, and nature values him not a whit. . . . This direction of thought brings me abruptly to a fork in the road where I stand paralyzed, unwilling to go on, for both ways lead to madness. . . .
>
> . . . you say, there is no right and wrong in nature; right and wrong is a human concept. Precisely: we are moral creatures, then, in an amoral world. The universe that suckled us is a monster that does not care if we live or die—does not care if itself

> grinds to a halt. . . . This view requires that a monstrous world running on chance and death, careening blindly from nowhere to nowhere, somehow produced wonderful us. . . .
>
> All right then. It is our emotions that are amiss. We are freaks, the world is fine, and let us all go have lobotomies to restore us to a natural state.

Such reflections, here so perceptively expressed, seem the inspiration behind the greatly varied forms of the new longing for immortality. The search is for a rational account of human life—one which includes death as a process *in* life, not as life's "opposite." And as Mr. Judge says at the beginning of chapter ten of the *Ocean*: "Unless we deny the immortality of man and the existence of soul, there are no sound arguments against the doctrine of pre-existence and rebirth save such as rest on the dictum of the church that each soul is a new creation." No wonder the idea of reincarnation is everywhere in the air!

Emile Zola

In her article, "The Tidal Wave," after naming Dostoevsky as the best example of the sort of writers needed to awaken mankind to its moral responsibilities, H.P.B. refers to Emile Zola as one who, in France, had done much to expose "the degradation and moral leprosy of his people." He was no Dostoevsky, and he left without criticism the offenses of the higher classes, yet she found Zola worthy of mention as a novelist "true to life," and along with Dickens and Thackeray as one of those who did "yeoman service," inducing partial reforms. It is of interest, therefore, that V. S. Pritchett, reviewing a recently published life of Zola (in the *New York Review of Books,* Nov. 10, 1977), gives this characterization of the French writer:

> . . . Zola was a powerful artist in a century which had turned to the novel for its emotions and instruction very much in the way our own mass public turns to the cinema, television, and radio. Like Dickens of an earlier generation, he went after his public . . . the fantasies of Zola depend upon documentation and a deep concern for Truth and justice. . . .

"Stand for Truth-telling"

> Zola's intervention in the Dreyfus affair . . . might seem to have a theatrical and even self-publicizing sound. In fact it was the most disinterested act of Zola's life. It brought him great popular abuse and indeed exile. Stronger than his hatred of anti-Semitism was his loathing of corrupt authority, the cover-

> ing up of professional groups, the tricks of the High Command, the judges, the politicians, and a self-serving bureaucracy. Zola was unbendable in his stand for truth-telling and the principles of the law. His tenacity is amazing. He acted as a citizen, not as a novelist, and stood firm against the considerable mass of people who were opposed to him.

Zola's dramatic intervention in the Dreyfus case, it may be noted, came some nine years after H.P.B.'s remarks about him in "The Tidal Wave" (published in *Lucifer* for November, 1889).

Caricature of Theosophy

L. Sprague de Camp, a writer who apparently makes a living ridiculing matters he takes no trouble to understand, outdoes all past performance in the July/August (1977) *Humanist* by suggesting that Erich von Däniken, author of the unfortunately popular *Chariots of the Gods,* was either inspired by or found his material in the writings of H. P. Blavatsky. If ever there was misrepresentation of what H.P.B. stood for and taught, this is clearly among the worst. Mr. de Camp confuses the metaphysical teaching of psychospiritual planetary influences on the earth and its inhabitants, as given in *The Secret Doctrine,* with the "sensational," materializing ideas of von Däniken, who proposes that great monuments of the past, such as the pyramids and the Easter Island statues, must have been the work of actual visitors from other planets.

False Suggestion

De Camp proceeds to give a slandering sketch of H.P.B.'s early life which has not even resemblance to truth, then calling her a "spiritualist medium" whose "magical tricks" were exposed by her "accomplices" in India (no doubt a reference to the Coulombs), after which, he says, she wrote, in *six* volumes, *The Secret Doctrine*—which he does not quote, preferring to cite A. P. Sinnett and Annie Besant. A statement used from the latter speaks of the Manasaputras coming from Venus, but this can not possibly have the meaning Mr. de Camp intends to suggest—von Däniken's claim of "extra-terrestrial visitors." The measure of Mr. de Camp's concern for accuracy may be taken from assertions made in a book published in 1966, *Spirits, Stars—and Spells,* among them the wholly invented claim that H.P.B. was addicted to marijuana in her later years and that she died after "reconciliation with the Russian Orthodox Church."

Careless Editing

Were it not for the appearance of such material in the *Humanist,* a generally reputable magazine, there would be little point in noticing so irresponsible a writer. But Humanism stands for free thought, and for separation of church and state, and often theosophists—whether or not they would be welcome in the orthodox humanist fold—sometimes think of themselves as humanists. Pico della Mirandola was certainly a founder of Humanism in the West, and theosophists count him as one of their number. For these reasons, they find it regrettable that the present editors of the *Humanist* fail to exercise more care in their choice of contributors. It is of course possible that one of the editors who contributes an article to this issue of the magazine shares some of Mr. de Camp's opinions, since he casually classes Theosophy with a varied collection of credulous beliefs. In this case we are obliged to conclude that the writer finds himself psychologically unable to investigate seriously what he is writing about, for who, after reading H.P.B., could lump Theosophy together with both "orthodox religious groups" and the various "yogis" of the day?

A Good Article

In order not to leave readers with a wholly jaundiced view of the *Humanist,* it may be added that this issue has a fine article on the *Nation's* courageous stand against censorship by the New York public schools, back in 1948. Paul Blanshard, author of several books critical of the Catholic Church, wrote the *Nation* articles the School Board found objectionable, and he writes in the present issue concerning Freda Kirchwey's staunch support of his right to criticize the Church, honoring her as an editor at this time because of her death earlier in 1977. Why speak of this here? The right to criticize in the open forums of free opinion is valuable to all. The point, then, is that Mr. Blanchard researched his subject carefully and wrote responsibly. Mr. de Camp does not do this, as the *Humanist* editors could easily discover, were they to make the small effort required. (Previous "Lookout" comment on Mr. de Camp's writings will be found in THEOSOPHY 36:330, and 55:189.)

Back to Blavatsky

It is a pleasure to turn from such raffish materials to the *Theosophist* for August, 1977, publication of the Theosophical Society

issued at Adyar, to take note of the excellent article, "The Spirit of H.P.B.," by B. R. Mullik. This writer calls upon his readers to renew their devotion to H.P.B. as the means of strengthening all aspects of Theosophical education and work. He says:

> When we survey the history of the Theosophical Society during the last one hundred years, we find that the original spirit of H.P.B. has either been watered down, compromised or forgotten and set aside.
>
> To read the life of H.P.B. and her writings it becomes abundantly clear that she was a merciless fighter against all that was false and untrue in the world . . . and in that fight she knew no compromise. She was ready to take any risk and suffer any consequences.

She would not, the writer points out, compromise with anthropomorphic religion, nor would she dilute Theosophy to please the scientific-minded of her time. She had no use for any sort of hypocrisy and, although compassionate toward human failings, she refused to soft-pedal the need of the soul to become the complete master of the body and its appetites and tendencies. This is a fine article having universal application, of value not just to the Theosophical Society but to all Theosophical students. Here H.P.B. appears as she was—and doubtless is—a fighter for Truth.

Invitation to Knowledge

In Wm. Q. Judge's *Letters That Have Helped Me,* Jasper Niemand, the editor of the original edition of this work, remarks:

> The pure instincts of children often reveal occult truths. I heard a girl of fifteen say recently: "When I was a small child I was always supposin'. I used to sit on the window seat and stare, stare at the moon, and I was supposin' that, if I only stared long enough, I'd get there and know all about it."

In the *Atlantic* for last September, Robert Coles, the child psychiatrist, writes about a similar child:

> . . . when she was eight she had a habit that puzzled, worried her parents, for the short time that it lasted . . . the girl liked looking out of the window of her parents' mansion. Across the street was one of those striking New Orleans cemeteries—the graves, elaborate and various tombs, all above the ground. . . . She wondered about who "those people" were, the departed. She wondered what kind of lives they lived, what they could tell her about those lives. She was struggling for detachment, perspective, and humor about the world she was

a part of. She was, in her own way, meditating about life's meaning.

Fear of "Inwardness"

Interestingly, Jasper Niemand recalled the child who was always "supposin" in order to illustrate an aspect of meditation. Dr. Coles turns his account of the New Orleans eight-year-old into a comment on the insensitive reaction of her parents. They worried about her, thinking that the time spent by the window might be a symptom of "abnormality." They decided that she had best be kept very "busy."

> They knew the enemy—inwardness. They knew the point of life: the headlong rush; the ferris wheel at the age of six, the assembly dance at the age of sixteen; the full calendar; the school choir, everyone beautifully, expensively, similarly dressed; the clocks that keep moving; the night dream that is promptly forgotten; the sigh before retiring that registers satisfaction and congratulation—no wasted time.

Later the mother felt reassured. "All children," she decided, "do a few crazy things, before they get sensible." She was right, Dr. Coles concludes—"just about all children do have their strange, wondrous, luminous, brooding, magical, redemptive moments."

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